

South Carolina Interagency Coordinating Council
April 1, 2026

Participants:

Heather Googe, Stephanie Donald, Amy Holbert, Sherri Evans, Scott Falcone, Brittany Zeller, Laura Tsuboi, Sarah Edmunds, Jessica Mearns, Lisa Henry, Willie Stokes, Laura McCraw

Online Participants:

Dione Ashley, Crystal Boyd, Sally Cannon, Tara Carroll, Brittany Corsell, Kathleen Cornish, Suzanne English, Jillian Franklin, Stacey Fuller, Jennifer Horton, Jennifer Jaques, Anne Kinsman, Karen Larson, Erin Laughter, Sonya Lebrun, Nuria Lopez, Deidre Martin, Shawna McCafferty, Lauren Nelson, Joe Roberts, Gail Shelley, Brianna Steed, Anna Starchville, Jennifer Strock, Frances Stroman, Tynia Thomas, Katrina Tompkins, Dominique Waller, Katie Wilson, Birley Wright

Meeting notes:

BabyNet Grant Application and Policy Updates:

- **Grant Application Submission:** The BabyNet grant application had to be posted by March 20th, with minimal changes to policies and procedures, mostly clarifications and updates to the budget. The grant must be submitted by May 20th, following two public hearings scheduled for April 30th and May 12th, allowing time for last-minute adjustments based on public feedback.
- **Policy and Procedure Revisions:** Nine policies and procedures were updated, including service provider agreements, EI provider enrollment forms, confidentiality, and eligibility determination. Updates included clarifying procedures for provider information changes, removing duplicate document requirements, and aligning forms with Medicaid processes. Track changes were used in draft documents to highlight modifications for public comment.
- **Manual Interim Process for Audiology Codes:** Due to CMS updates, audiology codes were added to the procedures and will be integrated into the BRIDGES system when changes go live. In the interim, a manual process using a specialized authorization form will be implemented for service coordinators to ensure timely payment for audiology services.

Indicator 12 and Related Compliance Measures:

- **Indicator 12C Introduction:** Indicator 12C was reported for the first time last year, with initial data collected but no comparative baseline. This year, new variables must be added to meet compliance requirements, such as routines-based interviews (RBI) and other state-approved family assessment tools.
- **Selection of Additional Variables:** Examples were presented from other states, discussed potential variables like timely IFSPs, service delivery according to IFSP, transition documentation, and family engagement. The group was asked to provide feedback on which variables would be most meaningful for South Carolina.
- **Feedback and Future Planning:** Participants were encouraged to email suggestions for Indicator 12 variables and indicated that the topic would be revisited in July, allowing for annual adjustments to compliance measures based on evolving needs and feedback.

Personnel and Organizational Updates in BabyNet: New hires and organizational changes within BabyNet were announced, including the appointment of a program manager, operations manager, and data analyst, and described changes to provider enrollment and assistive technology roles, with Laura Tsuboi joining as data analyst and upcoming recruitment for provider enrollment specialists.

- **Program Manager Appointment:** A new BabyNet program manager has been selected and will start on April 17th, bringing extensive early intervention experience and overseeing regional coordinators, ICC coordination, training plans, and policy development.
- **Operations Manager Recruitment:** The team is in the final stages of selecting an operations manager, who will supervise the claim specialist, data analyst, quality assurance specialist, and provider enrollment specialist.
- **Data Analyst Role:** Laura Tsuboi has accepted the position of data analyst, responsible for federal and state data management, reporting, and supporting directors' reports.

Data Reporting and System Improvements: Current BabyNet data was reviewed, including referral numbers, demographic breakdowns, and Indicator 7 performance, and discussed ongoing efforts to reduce referral-to-assessment timelines, address staffing and process inefficiencies, and move toward paperless systems with electronic document solutions.

- **Referral and Demographic Data:** As of the previous day, BabyNet had 15,602 children enrolled, with referral patterns consistent over the past 4-5 years.

Demographic breakdowns by race and gender were presented, showing alignment with state data and highlighting the 'other' category differences.

- **Paperless System Transition:** The group discussed challenges with paper files, HIPAA compliance, and the need for secure electronic records. Providers are increasingly using electronic document management applications. BRIDGES system enhancements are planned to integrate electronic document solutions and reduce human error.

Family Survey Response Rates and Outcomes: Positive news was shared regarding increased family survey response rates, reaching 44.9% compared to 40.63% last year, and discussed the impact on performance indicators, plans to share de-identified comments with service providers, and recognition for South Carolina's family outcomes measurement system at the national level.

- **Survey Response Rate Improvement:** The family survey response rate increased to 44.9%, the highest ever, up from 11.98% three years ago. This improvement was attributed to service coordinators' efforts in encouraging family participation and focusing on electronic survey submission.
- **Impact on Performance Indicators:** Higher response rates led to improved performance on Indicator 4 and other measures, with more balanced feedback contributing to nearly a 10-point increase across each of the three indicators.

CSPD Workgroup Strategic Planning:

- **Personnel Standards Development:** The Personnel Standards Workgroup is developing updated standards and core competencies for South Carolina, using national DEC standards as a foundation and linking resources from various state entities. A peer review group will be recruited over the summer to review drafts.
- **Pre-Service Training Initiatives:** The Pre-Service Training Workgroup aims to collate and share existing EI-relevant degree programs, create flexible early intervention credentials for students, and enhance faculty competitiveness for national grants. Letters of collaboration between BabyNet and universities are being considered to improve communication and hiring opportunities.
- **Recruitment and Retention Strategies:** This workgroup is surveying company owners and providers to identify recruitment and retention needs, with plans to develop strategic goals for enhancing provider recruitment and retention.
- **Timeline and Stakeholder Engagement:** The workgroups have set a timeline for reviewing and submitting standards, with multiple feedback iterations planned.

Stakeholder feedback is encouraged to shape the strategic plan, and committee structures will be reviewed annually to ensure relevance.

ICC Bylaws Revision Process:

- **Language and Membership Updates:** The bylaws are being updated to reflect current lead agency language, membership requirements, and alignment with regulations. Changes include adding Medicaid and mental health representatives, simplifying membership categories, and ensuring parent representation meets the 20% requirement.
- **Procedural Flexibility:** Prescriptive procedural elements are being moved from bylaws to procedures, allowing for easier updates and adaptation to changing operational needs, such as feedback mechanisms and committee report formats.
- **Committee Structure Revisions:** Standing committees are being reconsidered, with a shift toward ad hoc committees based on annual performance review and stakeholder feedback. Service coordination committees are proposed as permanent, with other committees formed as needed.
- **Voting and Amendment Process:** A clean draft of the bylaws will be circulated for feedback, with a three-week notice before the July vote. Amendments require a two-thirds majority of members present, and the process is designed to ensure broad input and legal review.

ICC Membership Selection and Appointment: The process was described for selecting ICC members, including reviewing interest applications, ensuring geographic and provider discipline representation, confirming interest, and submitting recommendations to the governor's office, with the expectation that final appointments may not be completed by July 1.

- **Interest Application Review:** The team reviewed 23 interest applications for parent and provider seats, using a whiteboard tool to group candidates by geography and discipline, ensuring broad representation.
- **Appointment Process:** Selected candidates are confirmed for interest and submitted to the governor's office for final appointment, with agency representatives also following the same process. The timeline for appointments is uncertain and may extend beyond July 1.

State Agency Updates and Collaborative Initiatives:

- **Annual Conferences and Events:** Agencies reported successful events, such as the AT Expo with over 700 attendees, summer university for professional development, and the upcoming combined early childhood inclusion and Champions PATH conference in September.
- **Autism Screening and Child Find:** Amy Holbert described a two-tier autism screening project in childcare settings, identifying children not yet referred to BabyNet and expanding efforts beyond Richland County.
- **MCC Waiver and LEND Program:** Anne Kinsman reported progress in the MCC waiver attendant care program, hiring nurses and increasing match visits, and ongoing preparations for the LEND program application and recruitment.
- **Mental Health and Early Intervention:** Updates included new hires in mental health offices, cross-training initiatives, and rollout of parent-child interaction therapy and psychotherapy for birth to seven age range.
- **Collaborative Transition Initiatives:** Sherri Evans highlighted joint MOUs, regional convenings, and service coordinator trainings to support early childhood transitions, with materials and events planned for the Midlands and Spartanburg areas.

Parent Book Signing Announcement: Tara Carroll announced an upcoming book featuring stories of children with late-identified or late-onset hearing loss, including a South Carolina parent, with plans for a book signing event in Greenville in the fall.

- **Book Signing Event:** A South Carolina parent and their child are featured in a new book about late-identified hearing loss, with a book signing event planned for Greenville in the fall; details will be shared as available.